

***U-M Bicentennial Early Faculty research project 1837-1845***

Ali Kahil, Dr. Gary Krenz, Michelle French, Bailey Oland, Kim Clarke and Angel Izaguirre  
U-M Bicentennial Office, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

The research project involves identifying the original faculty of the University of Michigan, starting in 1837 when the University moved to Ann Arbor until its first graduating class in 1845, and exploring their impact on and contributions to the University. The research findings will contribute to an exhibit and publications for the University's 2017 Bicentennial. The research was done mainly with primary sources of the Bentley Historical Library. The analysis of letters, newspaper, pictures, portraits and other documents helped us retrace the history of those men and know more about them. Secondary sources provided an initial list of names and some of their contributions. The first step was matching the secondary source information with primary sources in the archives. The second step was looking for sources that answer questions or fills gaps revealed during the first step. The third step was compiling the information by keeping the most important information and findings that are directly related to the University. We confirmed that the early faculty were Asa Gray, Douglass Houghton, Joseph Whiting, George Palmer Williams, Abram Sager, Andrew TenBrook, and Edward Thomson. Different sources helped us reveal their contributions, such as the role Asa Gray played in creating the University library even though he never taught a class. The research allowed us to know a little more about the University's past, and it also has given us the ability to share the early history of the University.





**BICENTENNIAL OFFICE**  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

# U-M Bicentennial Early Faculty Research Project 1837-1845

## ABSTRACT

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## OBJECTIVES

Research early faculty life, faculty contributions to the University of Michigan, and their life accomplishments.

## CONCLUSION

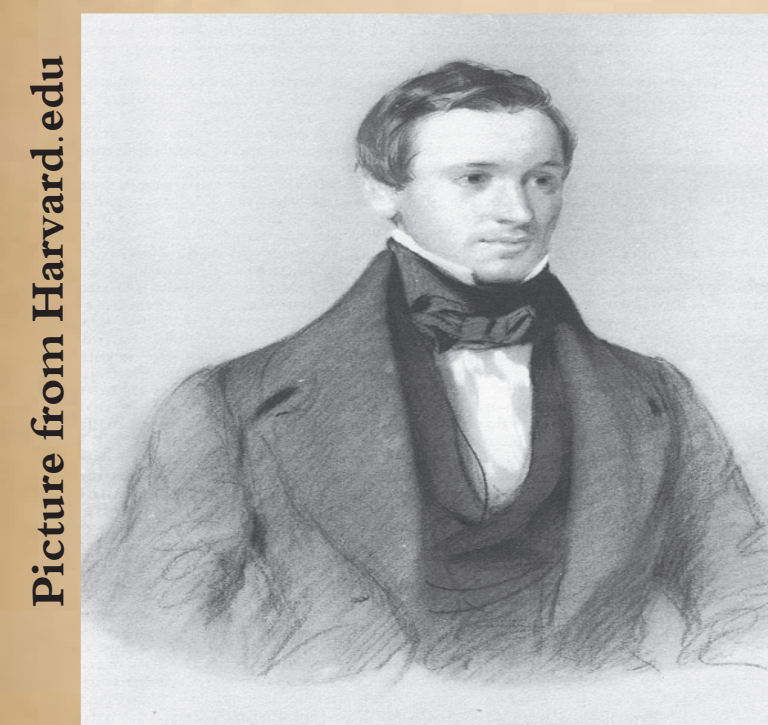
The research demonstrated the University's earliest commitments to science and excellence through its choice of faculty members.



Author: Ali Kahil  
Sponsor: Dr. Gary Krenz  
Other contributor: Kim Clarke, Bailey Oland,  
Angel Izaguirre, and Michelle French.

## RESULTS

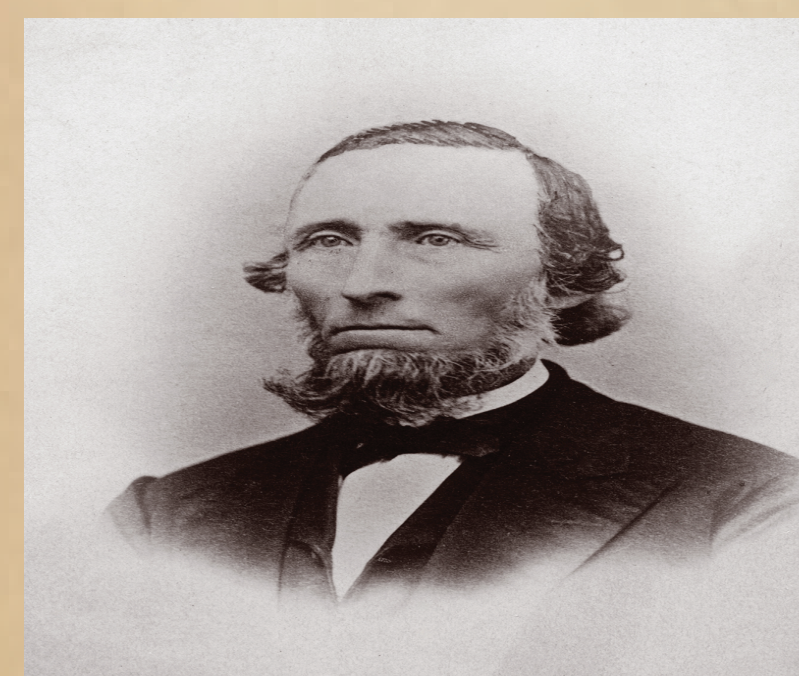
We discovered extensive documentation on the life accomplishment of the early faculty that included Asa Gray, Douglass Houghton, Joseph Whiting, George Palmer Williams, Abram Sager, Andrew TenBrook, and Edward Thomson.



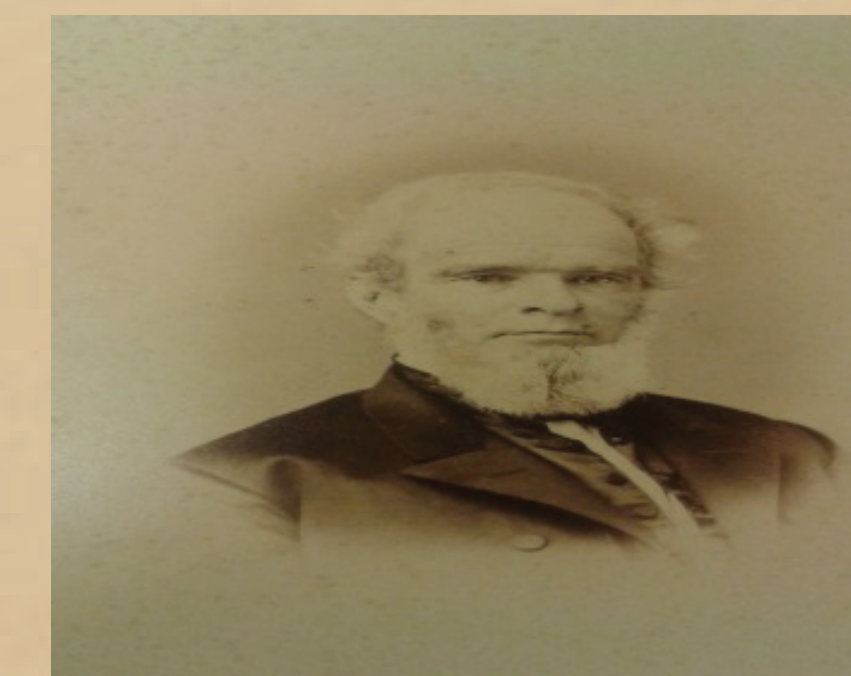
Picture from Harvard.edu

Asa Gray

First appointed teacher and Chair of Botany and Zoology from 1838 to 1842. He purchased nearly four thousand books for the General Library, and showed rare judgment in the selections made. He will later be recognized as one of the greatest botanists in history as well as a strong defender of Darwinian theory of evolution and one of Darwin's closest friends.



Abram Sager  
Professor of Zoology and Botany



George Palmer Williams  
Professor Physics, Mathematics  
and Languages

## METHODS

The Bentley Historical Library was an important tool for the project and offered a wide range of primary source materials such as pictures, newspapers, articles, and letters. The Regents Proceedings and other online sources were also widely used.

